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Letter dated 25 April 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

With regard to the preparations of the voluntary national presentation of the State of Qatar on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals on the theme of education, I have the honour to transmit the national report of Qatar for circulation at the annual ministerial review of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2011 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/2011/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 25 April 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: Arabic]

Voluntary national presentation of Qatar on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals concerning education

Contents

		Page
	Summary	4
I.	Introduction	5
II.	Major features of Qatar National Vision 2030	5
III.	Importance of education and of gender equality in the field of education	7
IV.	Progress made in implementing the two Goals	7
	A. Achieving universal primary education	7
	B. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women	10
	C. Achieving high-quality education	11
	D. Human rights education	12
	E. Family culture and sex education	13
	F. Encouraging girls to go into sciences and technology	14
	G. E-learning	14
	H. Teacher training	14
V.	Increased contribution made by Qatar to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (initiatives and international support)	16
	A. Reach Out to Asia	16
	B. The Al Fakhoora fund	17
	C. Education Above All foundation	17
	D. Initiative to support education in Iraq	18
	E. The Haiti project	19
	F. Student scholarships	19
VI.	Principal strategic successes	19
	A. Education for a New Era initiative	19
	B. Establishment of Education City	20
	C. Qatar Debate	20

D. World Innovation Summit for Education 20
E. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned Award 21
VII. Future challenges and trends 21

Summary

The State of Qatar has made major strides towards achieving its development goals. It has been successful in achieving universal primary education and has made great progress in strengthening gender equality. The National Development Strategy 2011-2016, which was formulated with a view to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, will accelerate the pace, particularly in view of the fact that Qatar has made real progress in respect of international indicators relating to human development, as was shown in the most recent human development reports.

As part of the global Millennium Development Goals system, the present voluntary national presentation therefore sets forth a brief introduction to the state of education in Qatar. Qatar has been able to exceed implementation of the Goals and move to a more advanced stage where, with a view to implementing the National Development Strategy 2011-2016 to the fullest extent possible, the focus is on the quality rather than the availability of education, on providing outstanding Qatari models for achieving excellence in education and on compliance with the national strategy for high-quality education and educational outputs.

High-quality education is considered to be a strategic imperative. Leaders in Qatar do not believe in merely making education accessible, because that has already been achieved. Their aim is to make available excellent education that meets the most exacting global educational standards, as was affirmed in Qatar National Vision 2030 and the related strategic plans, which took into consideration global standards in all matters relating to the development and quality of education.

The voluntary national presentation highlights the major features of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the importance of education and of gender equality in education. It shows the progress that has been made towards realizing Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3: it has achieved universal primary education and has made great progress in strengthening gender equality and empowering women. It provides high-quality education, human rights education, family culture and sex education, and promotes access by girls to science and technology, e-learning and teacher training. The presentation also shows the extent to which the contribution made by Qatar to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has increased as a result of initiatives and international support; the principal strategic successes; and future challenges and trends.

I. Introduction

1. Education plays a leading role in sustainable and comprehensive development. It is fundamental to human development, which is the true wealth of a State. All States are therefore concerned about education and have placed it at the forefront of their concerns, attempting to use every capability in order to achieve universality and ensure excellence at every level, viewing that as a basic human right in which all human societies are involved.

2. His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State, has been well aware of the importance of human resources and their development ever since he took over the reins of Government. That is clear from the advances that have been made at all levels and in every branch of the education system. High-quality education is considered to be a strategic demand and leaders in Qatar do not believe in merely making education accessible, because that has already been achieved. Their aim is to make available high-quality education that meets the most exacting global educational standards, as was affirmed in Qatar National Vision 2030 and the related strategic plans, which took into consideration global standards in all matters relating to the development and quality of education.

3. As a result of the close cooperation between all governmental and non-governmental institutions, sectors and machinery, Qatar has made major strides towards achieving its development goals. It has been successful in achieving universal primary education and has made great progress in strengthening gender equality. The National Development Strategy 2011-2016, which was formulated with a view to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, will accelerate the pace, particularly in view of the fact that Qatar has made real progress in respect of international indicators relating to human development, as was shown in the most recent human development reports.

4. As part of the global Millennium Development Goals system, the present voluntary national presentation therefore sets forth a brief introduction to the state of education in Qatar. Qatar has been able to exceed implementation of the Goals and move to a more advanced stage where, with a view to implementing the National Development Strategy 2011-2016 to the fullest extent possible, the focus is on the quality rather than the availability of education, on providing outstanding Qatari models for achieving excellence in education and on compliance with the national strategy for high-quality education and educational outputs.

5. The present national presentation will be followed by a series of follow-up reports that will shed more light on the extent to which education has progressed in Qatar and on the education-related development projects, programmes and plans which all have high-quality education as their main aim and are linked to global programmes of excellence in that field.

II. Major features of Qatar National Vision 2030

6. The major features of Qatar National Vision 2030 and the strategy for education and training, and links with the Millennium Development Goals, are described below.

7. Qatar National Vision 2030 is based on a set of the guiding principles of the Constitution of Qatar, on directives from the wise leaders of the State, and on wide-ranging national consultations. Its aim is to establish a society that is based on justice, benevolence and equality. The four main focuses of the Vision are human development, social development, economic development and environmental development. Education and the development of human resources are intrinsic to the first issue on which the Vision focuses, namely, human development, that also includes education and training, health and the labour force.

8. The aim of the vision for the education and training sector is to construct an education system that keeps abreast of contemporary international standards and is the equal of the very best education systems in the world. That system will offer citizens opportunities to develop their capacities and provide them with the best possible training, in order to allow them to succeed in a changing world where the demand for knowledge is ever-increasing. It will promote analytical and critical thinking and develop the capacity for creativity and innovation.

9. A strategy for education and training was devised for the period 2011-2016, with a view to achieving the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030 that are related to the desired outcome of an educated population, as set forth below:

- An educational system that is the equal of the most outstanding international educational systems and will equip citizens with the wherewithal to meet their needs and the needs of Qatari society.
- A national framework for formal and informal educational programmes that will provide Qatari children and youth with the skills and incentives to participate in the development of society.
- Well-developed, independent educational institutions that are efficiently and autonomously managed in accordance with central guidelines, accountable and subject to oversight.
- An effective system for funding scientific research that is based on the principle of partnership between the public and private sectors and conducted in cooperation with specialized international organizations and leading international research centres.
- A significant international role in cultural and intellectual activity and scientific research.

10. The strategy for education and training was based on a set of guiding principles that include excellence, equality, inclusivity, efficiency, flexibility of movement and relocation, and comprises a number of initiatives, outcomes and development projects and programmes.

11. The aims that Qatar National Vision 2030 seeks to achieve, the pillars on which it is built and the goals sought by the education and training sector are closely linked to the education-related Millennium Development Goals. Similarly, the initiatives of the strategy for education and training 2011-2016 consist of programmes, projects and activities designed to advance Goals 2 and 3, including, inter alia, the following:

- An infrastructure plan to ensure sufficient capacity for all students.
- Mandatory kindergarten and secondary education.

- Continual development of national curricular standards in order to meet international standards.
- A special education system to ensure that disabled children receive high-quality education.
- Adjustment of educational programmes to meet the various needs of students.
- Up-to-date, flexible programmes to complement basic education; training opportunities for adults.

III. Importance of education and of gender equality in the field of education

12. The wise leaders of Qatar have accorded education great importance, as may be seen from the way that all aspects, components and levels of the educational system have developed. Because the State is so interested in investing in human resources as the basis for the comprehensive development process, for which education provides the infrastructure, an endowment fund has been allocated to expenditure on education, using income from Qatar's gas resources.

13. The education community is notable for its equality and lack of gender-based discrimination, as will be made clear by the indicators and measures that will appear in the present report.

IV. Progress made in implementing the two Goals

A. Achieving universal primary education

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

14. Under its wise leadership, Qatar has taken care to provide education for all the children on its territory, as is shown by the set of measures that have been taken. The Constitution of Qatar provides, in article 25, that education is one of the basic pillars of social progress which the State shall ensure, foster and endeavour to spread; and, in article 49, that all citizens have the right to education; and the State shall endeavour to make general education compulsory and free of charge in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the State. The State determined that education should be compulsory in Law No. 25 of 2001, and Decree-Law No. 37 of 2002, concerning the establishment of the Supreme Education Council, directed that high-quality education should be attained in order to meet State requirements, that various and alternative education systems should be provided, and that creativity and educational excellence should be promoted. In 2005, Qatar became a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, articles 28, 29 and 30 of which relate to education, leisure and cultural pursuits. The national plan for education for all was prepared in 2003 on the basis of the six goals of education for all that were adopted at the Dakar Forum in April 2000, and progress was evaluated in a report in 2008. Those goals are closely linked to the education-related Millennium Development Goals.

15. The Supreme Education Council also formulated a policy for the support of special education, with the aim of providing an advisory framework for all schools, determining responsibility for students with disabilities and learning difficulties and overcoming all obstacles to their acquisition of all the requisite educational experiences. That policy focuses on the needs of students enrolled in education from kindergarten to the end of the secondary stage. Guidance is provided by a recommended model for educational support that sets forth arrangements and facilities for the planning and implementation of education and learning strategies, evaluation methods and the preparation of reports. Roles and responsibilities are identified for all parties involved in the implementation of the policy, in partnership with those in charge, institutions and the parties concerned with that group of students. The support strategy is based on a set of principles that include the right of the student to obtain appropriate education and to be provided with a wide-ranging and balanced educational experience that is appropriate for his personal needs; his right to an evaluation and determination of his needs and a response thereto; his right to be treated with respect and be provided with appropriate opportunities for learning and personal development. Education for students with disabilities and learning difficulties is considered to be the joint responsibility of schools and society.

1. Numbers enrolled in primary education

16. There has been an appreciable rise in the number of students enrolled in primary education, as shown in the table below:

Table 1
Students enrolled in primary education between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010

	Number of students		
Year	*Government*	*Private*	*Total*
2005/2006	38 008	32 919	70 927
2006/2007	37 793	37 006	74 799
2007/2008	38 201	39 331	77 532
2008/2009	38 598	46 047	84 645
2009/2010	39 469	49 213	88 682

17. From the above table, we can see that the number of students enrolled in primary education increased from 70,927 in 2005/2006 to 88,682 in 2009/2010.

2. Net enrolment rates in primary education

18. The country's education system in Qatar has grown in recent decades: where there were just a few schools, in 2009, there are some 600 Government and private schools, covering all stages of basic education, spread throughout the country and open to all. One of the most important consequences of this expansion has been the accessibility of the education system to all elements of society. That in turn has led to an increase in the number of students of both genders and increases in enrolment at all levels of education, especially primary education. Enrolment rates in primary education for both boys and girls have increased continuously, reflecting greater

opportunities for access to primary education in the State. The following table shows net enrolment:

Table 2
Net enrolment rates
(Percentage)

Year	*Net enrolment*
2005-2006	91
2006-2007	95.2
2007-2008	96.8
2008-2009	96.7

19. These primary education enrolment rates make Qatar a leader in providing extensive education opportunities to all social classes, and to males and females without discrimination or exception.

3. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 and reaching the last grade of primary education

20. One of the indicators of a successful and effective education system is a low dropout rate, at the primary level in particular, and the length of time that students remain in the education system, especially in the early grades. The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 and reaching the last grade of primary education is considered an indicator of the universality of primary education. In Qatar, the completion rate of students enrolled in Government schools is high, having risen from 93 per cent in 2003 to 98.6 per cent in 2008. Moreover, the remainder did not necessarily drop out of primary education. They may have merely left the country or transferred to private schools, which have become widely available in the State. Those rates mean that Qatar is close to having achieved universal education among students registered at the primary level, which is attributable to its commitment to compulsory primary education. Alongside that commitment by the State, the role of families in the education process should not be downplayed: the desire of families to raise the education levels of their children of both genders also contributes to students staying in school throughout the primary levels.

4. Literacy rates among females and males between the ages of 15 and 24

21. The Qatari education system has not only succeeded in expanding the country's education grid, achieved high levels of primary school enrolment, ensured that students remain in the education system over the long term, and minimized dropout rates, it has also succeeded in raising educational attainment in all sectors of society, notably among youth of both genders. Most youths in Qatar today are literate. Between 1990 and 2009, the literacy rate ranged from 95 to 99.8 per cent for females and from 98 to 99.4 per cent for males.

B. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women

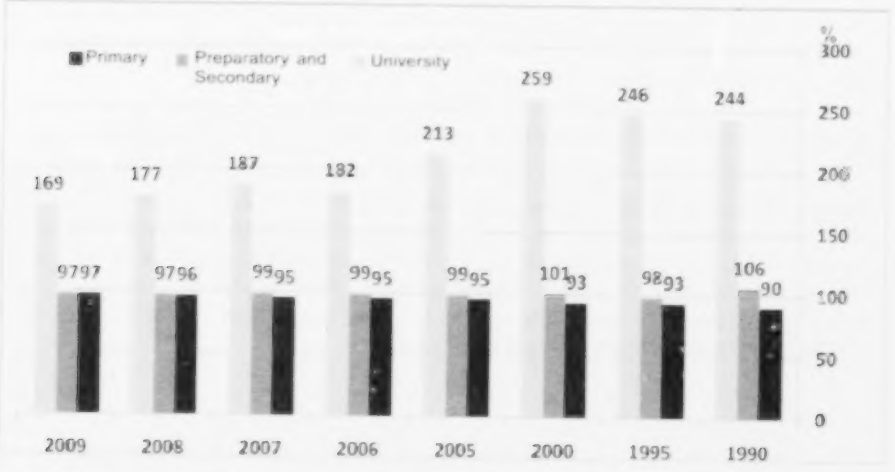
Goal: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education

22. Empowerment and, in particular, the empowerment of women, is regarded as one of the mainstays of social modernization and comprehensive development. In order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and bring about changes that will end manifestations of inequality in relations, opportunities, possibilities, incomes and distribution of power, the Millennium Development Goals regard empowering women and improving their social, economic and political status as a basic element of development. That is affirmed in the purpose of Goal 3, which is to eliminate gender disparities in a number of vital areas, notably, access to education and economic and political participation.

23. In Qatar, women have benefited in recent decades from Government efforts to create an advanced and open society based on equality of opportunity for all elements of Qatari society. That is evident from the rise in the rates of participation by women at all levels of education, notably in higher education, where women are in the majority. In academic year 2008-2009, 4,612 of the 5,604 Qatari students registered at the University of Qatar were female, a ratio of women to men of 460 per cent. When all the University students of recent years, both Qatari and non-Qatari nationals, are taken into account, including those studying at the University of Qatar, enrolled in private universities and studying abroad, the ratio of females to males decreases but remains high, at approximately 170 per cent for 2009 (see figure 1). There has been a slight decline in the ratio of females to males in higher education since 2005, because of the inauguration of studies at universities in Education City, which have enrolled large numbers of males.

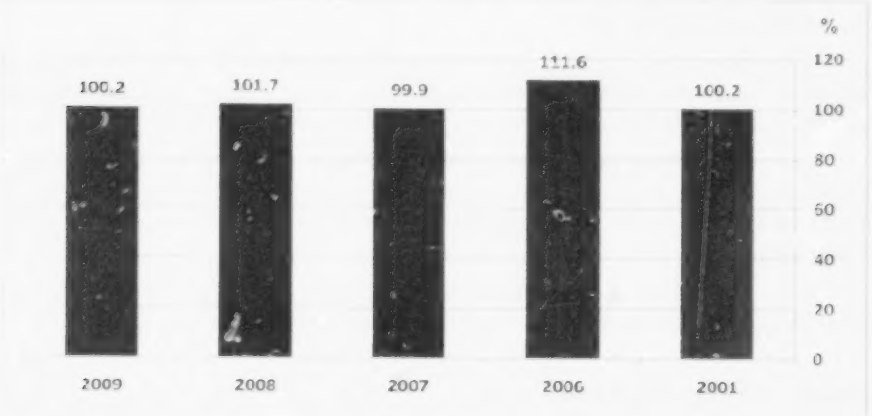
Figure 1
Ratio of females to males in primary, secondary and university education, 1990-2009



Source: Millennium Development Goals in Qatar, 2010.

24. In recent years, the education system in Qatar has expanded and eliminated disparities that were prevalent at certain stages of education, including gender disparity at all levels. Progress has been made towards realizing the principle of equality of opportunity for all citizens of Qatar, in accordance with the Constitution, article 19, which provides that the State shall maintain the pillars of the society and ensure security, stability and equal opportunities for all citizens. This principle was also provided for in Qatar National Vision 2030, one of the major goals of which is to establish a society based on justice and equality. The increase of over 50 per cent in the participation of Qatari women across the education system during the 2000-2008 period demonstrates the extent to which gender disparity has been eliminated at all levels of education across the State, ahead of the 2015 target date. The increase in the ratio of girls to boys at all levels of education in Qatar has resulted in an increase in female literacy rates relative to those of males, especially among younger people (see figure 2).

Figure 2
Ratio of female literacy to male literacy in the 15-24 year age group, 2001-2009



Source: Millennium Development Goals in Qatar, 2010.

C. Achieving high-quality education

25. As we noted in the introduction to the present report, when discussing the connection between advances in education in the country and political decisions at the highest level, the goal is not merely to ensure access to education, but to ensure access to high-quality education. His Highness the Emir laid the foundations for achieving that goal with his decision of November 2002 whereby the Supreme Council for Education was established. That decision, article 6, called for the quality of education to be improved in response to the needs of the State, by providing various alternative education systems that would promote creativity and educational excellence.

26. The most important results of that decision include the following:

(a) Independent schools have been established, and curriculum design methods have emerged that take into account global developments, teaching

methods, collaborative work and community participation; encourage creativity and innovation; adopt curriculum standards for most academic subjects; and aspire to a culture of excellence that will pave the way for improvements in quality, the development of human capacities and increased levels of performance;

(b) An evaluation system has been instituted, whereby a qualified board is responsible for evaluating all elements of education, employing scientific tools that measure all aspects of performance. With a view to the continuous development of all facets of the education process, it gives the teacher a major role in evaluating students, measuring skill growth and nurturing student talents;

(c) Community participation by all relevant parties has been mobilized in order to ensure high-quality education;

(d) E-learning is increasingly being introduced in order to make full use of information and communications technology, and such modern learning tools as CD-ROM and the Internet are used;

(e) The physical requirements for high-quality education are being provided, including outstanding school buildings equipped with libraries, laboratories, workshops and playing fields;

(f) Professional development programmes are offered for administrators and teachers, and the field of education has been professionalized through implementation of a certification system for education professionals;

(g) Branches of foreign universities have been opened in Qatar through the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, and a Community College has been established, diversifying the options for university education;

(h) Initial steps have been taken to implement a proposal for accrediting schools, in order to ensure uniform quality standards in all schools in the State.

D. Human rights education

27. Great care has been taken with regard to the teaching of human rights concepts and principles, given their importance to the formation of national sentiments and the promotion of positive values in developing young minds. The goal is to enhance students' confidence in their Arab and Islamic identity, their pride in their country and interest in working for its advancement, their awareness of cultures in the world around them, and a positive attitude towards relations between their country and the rest of the world's States, based on peace, understanding, cooperation and mutual respect.

28. Human rights concepts have been integrated into curricula in various ways, including as self-standing units and as the subjects of such in-class or extracurricular activities as drawing or other graphic arts. Curricula and textbooks cover various human rights issues, including political and civil rights, economic rights, the rights of the child, women's rights, social and cultural rights, and the rights of ageing and disabled persons.

29. Some schools in Qatar have produced new textbooks on human rights. They include a book on citizenship and character-building that addresses the rights of the

child, social responsibilities, democracy, citizenship, charity and volunteer work. Other books address human rights and citizenship.

30. National standards have been developed for the following academic subjects: Arabic language, English language, mathematics and the sciences. Schools are given the freedom to choose the content and curriculum most suitable for achieving their goals.

31. The diversification of education curricula allows both the student and the parent or guardian to select a school that matches the student's interests. National curriculum standards have been developed that contribute to the learner's personal growth in a holistic fashion, develop his cognitive capacities and guide him to new levels of critical, creative and analytical thinking. They also allow scope for free expression of opinion, scientific study and dialogue, and foster openness to the opinions of others, attention to personal health and concern for the stability of the surrounding environment.

32. A general framework for ethics education has also been designed in order to encourage students between kindergarten and secondary level to think about moral values and their practical application with respect to themselves, others, the society around them and the world in general. The ethics curriculum also aims to deepen their sense of responsibility and encourage them to live healthy lifestyles, build good relationships, take an interest in others and develop self-confidence. It fosters the values of respect and concern for others and promotes cooperation, caring, equality, love, peace and tolerance. It also encourages such social and civic values as respect for the law, good citizenship, involvement in community activities, truthfulness, integrity and honesty. It further fosters respect for the culture and civilizational heritage of Qatar and awareness of the need to preserve both the cultural heritage and the environment.

33. There are a number of other classroom and extra-curricular activities that foster a culture of human rights, including student parliament, various school groups and students' rights groups.

E. Family culture and sex education

34. A number of health services are provided to students of both genders, including first aid treatment and medical tests. School nursing staff have been trained to offer both health services and health education to students, and health education programmes offered by schools include the following: a behavioural guide for students; the "I am growing" programme for girl students; "No to drugs", "No to smoking" and "No to obesity" programmes; and other programmes that are conducted in cooperation with civil society organizations or such Government agencies as the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the Supreme Council for Health and the Ministry of the Interior.

35. A family culture curriculum has been designed in order to provide students with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence needed for successful social relations. The curriculum covers a number of moral, social, cultural, physical, spiritual, sexual and emotional areas. It is constructed on the basis of three major components: educational content, teaching methods and assessment techniques.

F. Encouraging girls to go into sciences and technology

36. The Education for a New Era initiative is designed to promote gender equality by setting standards to ensure that all subjects, including the sciences, are taught in the same way to both sexes. The State is encouraging girls to enrol in scientific specialties, in both the University of Qatar and Education City. As noted earlier, female enrolment in higher learning is several times higher than that of males.

G. E-learning

37. Qatari educational institutions, from kindergarten to secondary school, are well equipped with information and communications technology infrastructure. Many students are supplied in school with personal computers that are comparable to the personal computers used by schools in Europe. As part of the Education for a New Era initiative, teachers have received intensive training in incorporating information and communications technology into the teaching and learning processes. Through the Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology, Qatar has implemented a number of initiatives to make information and communication technology an integral part of a student's educational experience. Standards have been set for information technology courses, and students are taught how to use computers to enhance both their education and their lives in general.

H. Teacher training

38. Great care has been taken by schools to develop the capacities of teaching staff. Professional standards have been developed for teachers and school administrators. Extra time is set aside to develop the capacities of educators who serve in independent schools. Teacher evaluation processes have been enhanced and a programme has been established for the professional certification of teachers and administrators, who are required to produce credentials demonstrating that they possess skills, knowledge, capacities and experience in their field of work. A large number of training programmes have been conducted, as may be seen from the following table:

Table 3
Number of participants in various training programmes, 2005-2010

Subject	*Number of trainees*
Independent school teacher training	587
Independent school board of trustees member training	968
Administrator programmes	1 261
E-learning	615
Learning resource centres	1 174
Early childhood development	649
Additional educational support	1 316
Arabic language	921
English language	973

V. Increased contribution made by Qatar to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (initiatives and international support)

A. Reach Out to Asia

41. Reach Out to Asia was established in December 2005 by Sheikha Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani, the consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar, and operates under the auspices of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. A private charitable foundation, its purpose is to expand the scope of the Qatar Foundation's mission to include the Asian continent and the Asian expatriate community.

42. The mission of Reach Out to Asia is to assist local communities in overcoming obstacles, and create links that facilitate the achievement of high-quality primary and secondary education and thereby help to achieve some of the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the Education for All movement launched by the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It also seeks to foster human relationships among communities, create a safe educational environment, ensure equality of opportunity in education and provide educational aid to crisis-affected regions.

43. The agency has two main programmes: Reach Out to Asia Qatar, which focuses its efforts on Qatar, and another programme dedicated to Asia and the Middle East.

44. Reach Out to Asia has educational programmes in several countries that have been identified as requiring immediate assistance. Twelve countries have been given priority: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Viet Nam and Yemen.

45. Among its many accomplishments, Reach Out to Asia has collected more than $28 million in donations; provided relief to areas of Pakistan affected by the 2005 earthquake; rebuilt and equipped 18 schools in Kashmir, Pakistan, and provided educational opportunities for 3,000 children affected by the earthquake; organized the first ever trip to Pakistan of Qatari student volunteers, a group comprising 65 pupils from seven schools; established, in cooperation with its partners, two schools in Jalozai camp, an action which indirectly benefited some 20,000 persons; equipped 40 schools that were destroyed in the Israeli aggression against southern Lebanon in 2006; organized the *Atfaluna* (Our Children) campaign to encourage Qatari schoolchildren to make donations to their counterparts in Lebanon; built and equipped an educational centre in Aceh, Indonesia; rebuilt 960 schools in Jogjakarta, Indonesia; established, with the participation of leading universities from around the world, the Knowledge Network, which provides educational resources for the development of Asian communities; and launched a project to build an elementary school, a secondary school and a vocational centre in Vihear Suork, Kandal Province, Cambodia.

46. In October 2008, Reach Out to Asia, in partnership with Save the Children Sweden, implemented an educational project in the Gaza Strip for persons suffering psychological trauma. The project created 16 safe areas for emergency education and hired 48 recent graduates to work as teachers. Reach Out to Asia also partnered

Subject	*Number of trainees*
Social sciences	272
Mathematics	1 200
Sciences	1 160
Physical education	102
School self-assessment	335
Computers and information technology	116
Training of trainers	187
Academic English programmes for mathematics and science teachers	461
Total	**12 297**

39. Ministry employees have also been trained for integration into independent schools, as shown by the following table:

Table 4
Training of Ministry employees for integration into independent schools

Field	*Number*
Fast track training of female primary school teachers	21 women teachers
Second track training of male and female science and mathematics teachers	121 men and women teachers
Third track training of female early education teachers	140 women teachers
Training of Ministry of Education administrators on the principal track	70 principals
Training of mathematics and science teachers for semi-independent schools	200 men and women teachers
Training of vice-principals for semi-independent schools	40 vice-principals
Training of coordinators for semi-independent schools	40 coordinators

40. With effect from the 2007/2008 academic year, the Supreme Education Council began funding three-year training programmes for female assistant teachers for all levels from kindergarten to second grade. The course was offered by the University of Qatar and has been completed by 165 assistant teachers.

with Islamic Relief Worldwide to rehabilitate 22 schools in the Gaza Strip and train 300 teachers, with a view to improving the educational process. Some 21,000 students benefited from this project.

47. In 2007, Reach Out to Asia began working with its Syrian partners on improving the quality of education and integrating Iraqi and Syrian students. The project includes the construction of a community learning centre to provide training, social and cultural activities, business programmes and other educational services to students, teachers and community members.

48. In Nepal, some 11,000 students, 40 teachers and 55,000 community members from eight schools are benefiting from the agency's programme on disaster preparedness and response.

49. Reach Out to Asia has been active in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Indonesia since 2008, and its ongoing projects in those countries have benefited countless persons, whether students, teachers or other target groups.

B. The Al Fakhoora fund

50. In January 2009, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned launched the Al Fakhoora international campaign to protect students in the Gaza Strip. The campaign was launched after Israeli occupation forces attacked United Nations schools, including Al Fakhoora School, in the course of their aggression that began on 28 December 2008 and continued to 18 January 2009. The campaign is named after Al Fakhoora School, where 42 persons were killed and 100 others wounded after they had taken refuge there.

51. With start-up capital in the amount of $200 million, the Al Fakhoora fund was established in order to rebuild the educational sector in the Gaza Strip. Her Highness Sheikha Mozah contributed half of the start-up capital.

52. The fund has allocated resources for the immediate execution of a project to build several schools in the Gaza Strip that are designed to accommodate 1,000 students at all educational levels. Resources have also been allocated to fund 100 scholarships over a 10-year period for Palestinian students studying in Qatar and other countries.

53. Qatar launched the Al Fakhoora satellite channel, which will operate for a limited time, in order to support education in the Gaza Strip and collect donations for reconstruction. A website bearing the same name was also launched as part of a media campaign in support of Palestinian educational institutions.

C. Education Above All foundation

54. Established by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, Education Above All is an international foundation that seeks to protect and foster the right to education in areas that are experiencing or threatened by crisis, conflict or war, in implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to education, and in accordance with the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, articles 50, 94, 108 and 220.

55. The foundation seeks to achieve its goals by means of the following:

(a) Conducting studies and research, organizing seminars, forums and conferences, and executing multimedia campaigns, with a view to disseminating and deepening knowledge and raising individual, social and international awareness of the dangers that crises, conflicts and wars pose to education, and their impact on international peace and development;

(b) Monitoring, investigating and documenting violations committed against the educational system in time of crisis, conflict and war;

(c) Developing international legal machinery to defend the right to education and protect against any violation thereof, and pursuing and prosecuting the perpetrators of such violations.

D. Initiative to support education in Iraq

56. Further to the work being done by the International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq, this initiative was launched in 2003 by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned with a view to fulfilling her commitment to implement the recommendations of the Paris Conference on the Right to Education in Crisis-Affected Countries.

57. This initiative is part of Her Highness's commitment to defend the right to education, particularly in time of crisis, and is indicative of the special attention she gives to supporting the educational system in Iraq. That support is embodied by the establishment of the International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq and the launch of an initiative to support Iraqi academics.

58. The initiative, which will run from 2009 to 2013, includes the following components:

(a) An international academic conference in Baghdad on the Iraqi national educational identity.

(b) Development of a new curriculum for Iraq and training of Iraqi experts for that purpose.

(c) Rehabilitation of the Iraqi higher education system by building capacity and developing plans.

(d) Development of plans and programmes to qualify trainers and train teachers in all subjects.

(e) Development and implementation of informal education and illiteracy eradication programmes for women, youth and street children.

59. The goals of the project include fostering academic research in Iraq and enabling Iraqi researchers to benefit from the research facilities available at the Qatar Science and Technology Park and from the research fund of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. The project will also give outstanding Iraqi students the opportunity to study at one of the international universities in Education City.

E. The Haiti project

60. The Haiti project is in the planning phase.

F. Student scholarships

61. Qatar offers scholarships to students. Some 150 scholarships have been awarded to students from 28 countries.

VI. Principal strategic successes

62. Qatar is undergoing comprehensive change in all aspects of life, including education, which has all the attention and support of the country's able leaders. The education system and its products are the foundation of a comprehensive and sustainable national development effort that will enable Qatari society to compete internationally in the age of globalization and knowledge-based economies. It has become a national duty and an obligation to society to develop education.

63. Set forth below are some of Qatar's initiatives and successes in education.

A. Education for a New Era initiative

64. This initiative has brought about change in all education tracks, systems and structures, with a view to offering an outstanding education that is in step with the times, enables students to think critically and learn independently, teaches the life skills that individuals need in order to understand the demands of the times and contributes to the advancement of society.

65. The core principles of this initiative are autonomy, accountability, diversity and choice.

The initiative emphasizes the following:

- Educational opportunities must be available to all members of society, in accordance with their desires and needs.
- Education must extend to all members of society, including persons with disabilities.
- National curriculum standards must be established, in accordance with relevant international standards and norms.
- Teachers should continue their professional development through training programmes, including programmes on curriculum standards and teaching methods.
- Technology for education should be used in both the teaching and learning process.
- National professional standards must be established for the education sector.

- A professional approach must be developed towards the education sector and the quality of teachers and principals improved by developing specific criteria for licensing school teachers and principals.

B. Establishment of Education City

66. In 1995, with the aim of accelerating human development in Qatar and the region, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani decided to establish the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

67. Education City is the principal project and pioneering initiative of the Qatar Foundation, which is headed by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned. This project brings together several institutions with a view to setting educational standards in the region, from the earliest stages of the education process to graduate studies.

68. Branches of six leading American universities form the heart of Education City. Those branches offer some of the same prestigious programmes that are taught at their respective universities in the United States of America and maintain the same quality standards. Alongside those universities stands the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, which is locally based and offers graduate programmes. Education City's first European partner, HEC Paris, opened its doors in 2010 and offers executive training programmes and conducts research.

69. The primary goal of Education City is to establish high-quality university programmes that will build the capacities of the region's human capital. The focus of the most recent phase of the project has been on achieving synergy and efficiency, in order to ensure that the various institutions increasingly function as a coherent, multidisciplinary institution.

70. Each of the institutions strives to improve its research programmes, frequently working in cooperation with local partners. This will strengthen their integration into Qatar's social fabric and offer students the opportunity to become part of the national and international research communities.

C. Qatar Debate

71. Qatar Debate was established in 2002 with the aim of raising future generations to coexist with and accept others, their cultures and cultural legacies. It also seeks to foster the desire to engage in dialogue and debate, and to encourage youth to take initiative and express their opinions freely and courageously.

D. World Innovation Summit for Education

72. In 2009, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned launched the World Innovation Summit for Education, an annual summit of decision makers from various sectors who share the belief that access to high-quality education is a fundamental human right and a condition of participation in society. Through practical initiatives at all levels of education, the World Innovation Summit for Education aims to make a real difference in the lives of ordinary people throughout

the world. The annual World Innovation Summit for Education Award for Education is given every year to individuals or teams who have made a significant contribution in the field of education.

73. Other World Innovation Summit for Education initiatives include the September 2010 symposium for Arab ministers of education, organized in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the World Bank. Symposium participants made a commitment to a common and transparent system for assessing quality of education. In October 2010, the World Innovation Summit for Education organized a leadership seminar for 12 recently appointed university presidents from developing countries.

E. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned Award

74. The World Innovation Summit for Education Awards are designed to identify and promote innovative educational projects from around the world. Since 2009, six winners have been chosen every year. Past winners include the Nanhi Kali project to provide education to needy girls; the Widows Alliance Network, which helps widows in Ghana integrate into society; and the Mother-Child Education Programme, a Turkish initiative that aims to educate and support preschool children from under-resourced communities by training mothers to be the "first educator".

75. The process of selecting the World Innovation Summit for Education Award winners is under way. This award is the only major international prize for education and it is expected to become the internationally recognized standard. The 2011 winners will be announced at the World Innovation Summit for Education Summit, which will take place in Doha from 1 to 3 November 2011.

VI. Future challenges and trends

76. The increased level of educational attainment of Qatari youth of both sexes demonstrates beyond a doubt that the educational system has made a qualitative leap. But the question is whether that is sufficient to meet the evolving needs of the Qatari labour market and respond to the challenges that will face Qatari society in the future, and whether it is sufficient to help Qatar fulfil its aspiration to build a prosperous society that is capable of engaging with other societies and playing a significant role in the global partnership for development, as set out in the Pillars of the Qatar National Vision 2030. A further concern is whether current levels of educational attainment are adequate, if the goals set out in the National Vision, particularly those that call for an educated population and a capable and motivated workforce, are to be met.

77. Qatar's economic growth, the move towards a diversified economic base and increased dependence on expatriate labour have an impact on and pose a challenge to the educational system. One of the most significant challenges facing the educational system is to ensure capacity to meet the requirements of the labour market and Qatari society's need for skilled graduates. The system must also address the question of teacher turnover and its effect on the continuity of the educational process, and the effect of a life of ease on student attitudes towards education and learning.

78. The recent growth in Qatar's population has increased the number of students and, consequently, raised school enrolment at all educational levels, necessitating the opening of more schools, both in and outside Doha.

79. There is no doubt that Qatar's development aspirations require it to develop citizens who are qualified and capable in all areas, and able to take on future challenges and responsibilities. This goal cannot be achieved without building the capacities of Qataris, in particular youth. With increased theoretical knowledge, practical experience and administrative training, they will be ready to contribute to the country's overall development.

80. Qatar's future educational goals are the following:

- Create a comprehensive database on education in Qatar.
- Continue to increase the educational attainment of students in order to achieve high-quality education.
- Increase community participation in and the contribution of all sectors to education.
- Foster the Arab and Islamic national and cultural identity of Qatari society.
- Emphasize the principles of the Education for a New Era initiative.
- Foster scientific research and its applications.
- Promote the continuing development of education sector personnel.
- Strengthen excellence programmes in private schools and, in particular, e-learning programmes.
- Raise students' motivation to learn and to continue their education, and promote the role of the family in learning and education by fostering a culture of continual appraisal.
- Make greater efforts in the future with regard to preparing secondary school students who wish to enter the labour market.